

Children's Justice Act Committee
Thursday, January 17, 2019
100 Community Place, Room 2.610
Crownsville, MD 21032
1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Participating Members:

Detective Taylor Pyles, Chair
Dr. Kerry Hannan, Vice Chair, Baltimore Child Abuse Center
Elizabeth Hall, Maryland Department of Disabilities
Anne Hoyer, Office of the Secretary of State
Sr. Deputy Robert Kovacs, Harford County Sheriff's Office
Vernice McKee, Department of Human Services
Diane Shaffer, Volunteer
Joan Stine, Volunteer/Advocate (phone)
Krista Trahan, Baltimore County Department of Social Services, Crimes Against Children Unit

Guests:

Jennifer Beskid, Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission
Karen Carvajal, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Susan Hansell, Maryland's Children Alliance
Shawn Mallet, Pending Member

Staff:

Kelly Gorman, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention
William Jernigan, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention
Sabraya Knight, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention
Jessica Wheeler, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:29 p.m. Members and guests introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes

Sr. Deputy Kovacs made a motion to approve minutes. Dr. Hannan seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the minutes were approved.

III. ChildFirst® Forensic Interviewing Training Update

Ms. Beskid and Ms. Carvajal provided members with an overview of the ChildFirst® forensic interview training and informed the group of upcoming training. ChildFirst® is a 5-day training on forensic interviewing for social workers, law enforcement, and prosecutors who work with child abuse cases. The trainers emphasize the need for peer review of forensic interviews and research shows that continued education is essential to information retention and skill building. Peer review was also highlighted as an accreditation standard for Child Advocacy Centers (CACs). Members discussed the importance of reinforcing the preliminary nature of the ChildFirst® training and that it is meant to be an entry level forensic interview training with the understanding that additional training is needed to conduct forensic interviews. Ms. Hansell will partner with the ChildFirst® program to ensure collaboration with the CACs.

IV. Department of Human Services Updates

Ms. McKee informed members that the Department is in the final days of recruitment for the Medical Director position created during the 2018 General Assembly. Ms. McKee will provide updates when appropriate.

V. Subcommittee Updates

A. Training Subcommittee

Members were provided with a draft of the Training Directory and Detective Pyles encouraged members to provide feedback. Ms. Wheeler informed members that the Training Directory will be finalized in March 2019.

B. Membership Subcommittee

Ms. Wheeler informed members that Mary-Ann Burkhart, an experienced child abuse prosecutor, has been appointed a member of the Committee.

C. Child Advocacy Center Best Practices Workgroup

Ms. Hansell provided members with a brief overview of the CAC Best Practices Workgroup. The workgroup has been focusing on developing a statewide protocol for CACs to respond to child sex trafficking (CST) cases. Most recently, the workgroup conducted a survey of every CAC in Maryland to determine current protocols in place for CST cases and identify gaps to inform the protocol development process. The next workgroup meeting will take place in March 2019.

VI. 2019 Plan and Goals

Detective Pyles asked members for their feedback on the Committee's 2019 goals. Several suggestions were made including:

- Enhance resources to address vicarious/secondary trauma of the child welfare workforce including law enforcement and child protective services
 - Members agreed to prioritize this in the CJAC's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
- Enhance resources for trauma-informed training for child welfare workers
 - Members agreed to prioritize this in the CJAC's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
- Study and make recommendations to address child abuse prosecutions.
 - The Committee noted that the prosecution rate for these cases are low but the reasons vary.
 - The Committee created a workgroup to study this issue and develop recommendations that will be presented to the full Committee.

VII. Old/New Business

Ms. Wheeler informed the group that Ayuda has received funding from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) program through the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention for additional language access services for victims. Ayuda's Language Access Program is launching a Victim Services Interpreter Bank in Maryland in March 2019. The Bank will be available for use by non-profit organizations serving Maryland residents who are victims of crime with non-legal victim services. The Bank will provide free in-person interpretation, telephonic interpretation, and document translation services. These services are available 24/7 and the interpreters are trauma-informed. Once the bank has launched, providers can use an online system to request interpretation or translation services for their clients who are victims of crime.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Next Meeting:

April 18, 2019

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention

100 Community Place, 1st Floor

Conference Room B

Crownsville, MD 21032